

EVALUATION OF RURAL/METRO FIRE SERVICES PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The problem identified for this applied research project was that the Rural/Metro Fire Department performance evaluation system receives very poor ratings on employee surveys. The purpose was to gather data and information in order to evaluate the existing evaluation tool, and to determine whether a revision is necessary. This research utilized the evaluative research methodology to answer the following research questions:

1. Are performance evaluations necessary?
2. Are there common problems that are associated with administering an evaluation system?
3. What are the desirable characteristics of an employee performance evaluation?
4. Should merit pay be tied to performance evaluations?

The procedure used a literature review to gather recent information available on the employee performance evaluation. From the data, two tables were constructed to evaluate the characteristics of the evaluation tool.

The major findings of this research indicated that the majority of evaluations conducted in America are done poorly. The prominent factor was poor supervisory training on how to prepare and conduct a performance evaluation. In addition, the importance of a well designed form having certain characteristics, such as behaviorally anchored rating scales and objectivity, was emphasized.

The recommendations resulting from this research included (a) developing a course to better train supervisors in conducting and preparing performance evaluations, (b) revising the existing evaluation tool to take out some subjectivity, and (c) conducting further studies into whether pay should be tied to performance evaluations.

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INTRODUCTION

Performance evaluations are becoming more and more popular with the governments of cities, states, and towns, as well as both large and small businesses. Rural/Metro Fire Department has utilized an employee evaluation system for over twenty years. Over the past twenty years the system has changed multiple times with the intent of improving the performance of employees, as well as the evaluation tool itself. The problem is that one thing that has not changed is the employee complaints that the system is too subjective. These claims indicate that there are inconsistencies between different supervisor's ratings, thus making it difficult for some firefighters to accept the results. The purpose of this paper is to investigate employee performance evaluations and evaluate the Rural/Metro Fire Department's Annual Achievement Evaluation tool.

The methodology used included a literature review at the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Tucson-Pima Public Library, the University of Phoenix Library, and the Internet. The literature review investigates the latest insights on employee performance evaluations. Then the Rural/Metro Fire Department performance evaluation form was evaluated. The evaluative research methodology was utilized to answer the following questions:

1. Are performance evaluations necessary?
2. Are there common problems that are associated with administering an evaluation system?
3. What are the desirable characteristics of an employee performance evaluation?
4. Should merit pay be tied to performance evaluations?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Rural/Metro Fire Department is a subsidiary of Rural/Metro Corporation. Rural/Metro is a publicly traded, for-profit corporation whose main line of business are medical transportation (ambulance

service) and fire department services. The fire department runs very much as a municipal operation, but with a heightened sense of business operations.

Fire department and ambulance operations are a service type business. Rural/Metro recognizes that its employees are the company's greatest asset. In order to communicate, develop, and reward the employees, the company supervisors conduct regular performance evaluations. The performance evaluation system has changed many times over the past twenty years. Each change had the intent of improving the performance of employees, as well as the evaluation tool itself.

The current system is a traditional supervisor-employee evaluation using a behaviorally anchored structure. This structure allows the supervisor to rate the employee on a scale of 1 to 5, matching behavioral statements to observed performance. One represents unacceptable performance, and five represents distinguished performance. The evaluations are tied into a pay for performance merit pool. This merit system takes into account where the employee is on the pay range (compa-ratio) and assigns a range of merit increases available. The system is designed so the top performers receive the highest raises, while the low performers receive less of a raise. The system is designed to allow a new worker, who is just learning, the ability to get higher percentages. If a tenured firefighter wants the same high percentage, he/she must perform commensurate to experience.

During the last two employee surveys conducted in Pima County fire operations, over 95% of the employees rated their satisfaction with the evaluation system as poor. Complaints range from the form being designed so someone can't get a good score, to the compa-ratio system itself. This dissatisfaction is a cause for fear, poor morale, and distrust.

Addressing this concern though the evaluative process refers to Module 6 “Labor Relations”, and Module 8 “Ethics” of the *Executive Development* course (NFA, 1998) of the Executive Fire Officer Program. These modules present approaches to problem solving in labor-management relations and examine ethical leadership.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was conducted utilizing resources from the National Fire Academy’s Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Tucson-Pima Public Library, the University of Phoenix Library, and the Internet. An effort was made to capture, when possible, the latest intelligence on this topic by attempting to examine resources that were written less than 3 years ago.

The performance evaluation has many important functional aspects in the fire service. The evaluation process is a tool for management to communicate the organizational goals and objectives to the employees, motivate the employees in order to improve individual performance, and distribute organizational rewards such as salary increases (Deml, 1995). The employee evaluation is also a tool for management to identify those employees who are truly exceptional and who are the future leaders of the department. Effective employee evaluations are a vital component of a good human resources program (Weddington & Weinberg, 1997). In addition, fire administrators must be able to show that their organizations are run efficiently and that the employees are productive.

The performance evaluation also has many legal implications. Because the evaluation provides documentation of performance deficiencies, misconduct, and recaps of warnings, they may be used to refute allegations that an employer acted arbitrarily and inconsistently (Levinson, 1996). The importance of this is shown in a study of 120 wrongful termination suits surveyed by The Rand Corp. in 1988

(Spragins, 1991). The survey showed that the employee won 66% of the suits. The average award was \$650,000 per suit. By giving bad employees good evaluations, those responsible for evaluations are setting their department up to be sued and possibly pay huge money judgments.

In a 1997 nationwide survey of human-resources professionals by the society for Human Resource Management, found that only 5 percent of the respondents were “very satisfied” with their organizations performance evaluation systems, while 42 percent were dissatisfied to some extent (Barrier, 1998). In most American organizations, employee evaluations are not done well and are not effective (Stafford, 1997). Stafford (1997) points out that there are some universal complaints regarding the employee review system. These include the fact that many managers do not get good training on how to do evaluations, the evaluation document converts the evaluator’s opinion to fact, and most evaluations look backwards on problems and success months’ after-the-fact. From the research, it appears that most of the problems of performance evaluation are divided between those of the supervisor and those with the evaluation tool itself.

Levinson (1996) points out that many managers and supervisors dislike or even fear, conducting and preparing employee evaluations. Levinson also found that many supervisors hurry through the process, and fearing confrontation, hesitate to record any negative comments. Supervisors may also be reluctant to record any negative comments because it could adversely affect the employee career or merit increase (Hosnick, 1983). Most managers are not sufficiently skilled in conducting the evaluation and subsequent interviews (Ridgeway, 1988). Just because someone is promoted into a supervisory position, does not automatically qualify that person to be an appraiser of human performance. Without proper training, unreliable assessments will exist (Ridgeway, 1988). Giving good performance feedback, is not a natural act. It’s something that managers will avoid if they can (Barrier, 1998).

In relating to the common problems of the supervisors' lack of proper training, and dislike of performing evaluations, there are three common rating mistakes that supervisors make. They are leniency, halo, and proximity errors. The first rating error is leniency. The leniency error reflects the prevalent inclination for people to avoid the use of negative ratings when describing someone else (Hosnick, 1983). The next common error is the halo effect. The halo effect error occurs when a supervisor has a general perception of an employee, either positive or negative, and this perception influences all of the supervisors ratings throughout the entire evaluation. Hosnick points out that this is usually not done consciously. The last common error Hosnick describes is the proximity error. This occurs when raters use the traditional type of performance evaluation forms that rate several aspects of a job. For example, a standard rating may have ratings for such things as fire knowledge, hose evolutions, peer interaction, etc. The Proximity error occurs because these aspects appear near one another on the form. As a result, supervisors tend to give the employee similar ratings on these dimensions even though the employee's actual performance on each aspect may differ.

In examining the evaluation form itself, Goddard (1989) contends that the current methods of assessing an employees worth are largely subjective and discriminatory. Goddard states that using evaluation forms that contain vague, ill-defined, subjective performance criteria leads to all kinds of biased judgement. A survey of 50 medium-to-large-size cities located throughout the United States revealed that the majority of the cities used appraisal instruments that were based on subjective, generalized criteria (Billows, 1983). This type of tool allows for individual perceptual differences, and the intrusion of personality conflicts in the preparation.

It appears that there are some common positive traits to systems that are successful. The first trait is that evaluations should be done at least annually (Weddington & Weinberg, 1997). More frequent intervals may be appropriate for probationary employees or employees with performance problems.

Irregular evaluations convey a lack of commitment by the department. Next, the evaluations cannot be written overnight (Farr, 1998). Farr recommends keeping both positive and negative “performance flashes” in each employees file. Issues arising from court decisions surrounding the performance appraisal process indicate that departments need a well-designed evaluation form (Ridgeway, 1987).

Weddington & Weinberg (1997) state that evaluations should be based on objective job-related factors. Concrete descriptions or examples of employee performance should justify these factors. In order to have a full understanding of the difference between objective versus subjective we need to look at the definition of each. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary (1997), the term objective means “existing outside and independent of the mind”, “treating or dealing with facts without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices”, and “an aim, goal, or end of action”. The term subjective means “of, relating to, or arising within one’s self or mind in contrast to what is outside”. When applied to an evaluation, objectivity is based upon an observable trait that can not be influenced by an outsider’s perception.

Behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS) are a combination of the critical incident and rating scale methods (Maiorca, 1997). BARS are designed to assess specific behaviors that are critical to the job, instead of general traits and characteristics. BARS attempt to reduce rater bias and error by anchoring the rating with specific behavioral examples. Ideally they minimize the evaluators’ impreciseness and subjectivity.

Behavioral statements as anchor points have many apparent advantages. However, in real life situations, many of the errors mentioned above will remain. They remain because behavioral statements placed next to numerical scores allows the rater to ignore the statements and revert to the frequent error of rating everyone on a basis of a preconceived numerical score (Maiorca, 1997).

Levinson (1996) states that the courts receive and consider the use of subjective criteria with great caution. He adds that while nothing in the law forbids the use of subjective criteria in the evaluation, the employer using an “objective” evaluation system containing subjective components must be able to demonstrate the following:

- That the employer had good reasons for using a subjective evaluation system
- That the system did have objective components or at least permitted an objective evaluation of its subjective criteria
- The employer used the system uniformly to evaluate all employees.

Subjective factors can play an important role in assessing the employee’s performance. In 1997 Weddington & Weinberg wrote that the employer should focus on specific behaviors which form the basis of the opinion on something that may otherwise be viewed as subjective. An example of this could be categories such as interpersonal skills, or attitude. These categories are subjective, however utilizing objective observed behaviors a supervisor could assess performance.

In some types of performance evaluations, job responsibilities are weighted according to its importance to the employee’s job function (Hulme, 1998). While weighting may be highly desirable in some situations, it requires careful form preparation and review.

A variety of rating scale options are available. Common types include 4 to 7 levels of verbal or numerical delineations. Performance evaluations that have too few rating scales restrict the flexibility of the supervisor and tends to promote mediocre employee performance evaluations (Ridgeway, 1987). In addition, having more than 5 to 7 rating levels are extremely hard for the rater to reliably prepare. Combination rating scales are systems for which words are assigned numerical values to allow the final

tabulation of a numerical score (Ridgeway, 1987). Combination rating scales tend to be more objective than averaging words.

If an employee receives a rating of less than “satisfactory”, the supervisor should provide a specific explanation of the problem, and suggestions for improvement (Ridgeway, 1987). To prevent the positive biased ratings, the supervisor should also explain all ratings of “above average”.

Supervisors must be careful about what they write in an employee evaluation. Any derogatory information about the employee must be well substantiated, so that the employer can show that it had a reasonable basis to believe the information was true (Levinson, 1996). Levinson also gives a few recommendations to avoid setting the company up to be sued. The recommendations include that supervisors should record instances of misconduct or poor performance, should not record instances of poor performance if the employee was told that the incident would not count, should not record negative things to retaliate against an employee, and should never write false accusations or statements in an employee evaluation.

One of the most critical aspects of the entire appraisals process is to provide the employee with the opportunity to discuss the assigned rating with the supervisor (Ridgeway, 1997). A fairly common procedure is to have employees prepare their own ratings based on their own perceptions of performance. The supervisor will also prepare a rating, then both the supervisor and the employee can compare the two. Differences can be discussed and negotiated as necessary. Employee’s perceptions of his or her own performance are generally lower than that of the employer (Ridgeway, 1997). If the supervisor has done a good job interacting with the employee during the year, there should be no surprises. Systems that get complaints are the ones where the supervisor has saved up all the bad news for review time (Barrier,

1998). The supervisor who saves up all the bad news for review time should be the one receiving the poor evaluation.

There have been two new trends in corporate America regarding performance evaluations. The first is the 360° review. A 360° review is allowing multiple sources of information to be compiled for an employee's evaluation. The person receiving the evaluation may receive input from subordinates, peers, and his/her supervisor. According to a study of 200 firms doing 360's, it is being conducted mostly at the executive and manager level (Stafford, 1997). The practice is just beginning to extend to the front line personnel. 360° reviews have been called "a fad" (Schafer, 1996), but over 13% of the companies are doing them now (Gruner, 1997). Some of the advantages are that they can take less than 10 minutes for each person to complete, and it is an excellent way to get a broad range of feedback.

The second new trend is to let the employee review him or herself. Lancaster (1998) wrote that "Corporate America has spent billions of dollars making this a pleasant experience, and the process doesn't work because we're doing it backwards". In Lancaster's report, he advocates letting the employee complete his/her own evaluation, then the supervisor meets with the employee to review it. During the review, the supervisor can ask questions, and give feedback.

Some fire departments award their merit increases at the time of the performance evaluation. Others award the merit increase at some other time, such as corresponding to the fiscal year or by terms set in their union contract. According to Barrier (1998) performance reviews should not automatically be thought of as a merit increase. He points out that if your wages are based upon performance reviews, and you have a limit on raises, then your performance reviews can't be very good.

PROCEDURES

This research project utilized the evaluative research methodology to gather and analyze data on performance evaluations. This was done in order to determine whether or not there are needed improvements to the current evaluation system at Rural/Metro Fire Department.

A literature review was initiated in June 1998 at the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center (LRC). Additional visits to the Tucson-Pima Public Library and the University of Phoenix Library were conducted between July 1998 and November 1998. The literature review targeted trade journals, magazines, and newspapers relating to employee evaluations. The findings of those sources were summarized in the literature review section of this research paper.

Besides the literature review, an evaluation of the Rural/Metro Fire Departments Annual Achievement Evaluation tool (Appendix A) was conducted by the author utilizing the information gathered during research. This evaluation required the development of two matrix type tables. The table 1 evaluates the objectivity/subjectivity of each performance category. Table 2 compares the desirable characteristics of an evaluation that was revealed during research.

Limitations

During the course of research several limitations were encountered. The first limitation was that the author found a lack of current information on topics needed to answer the research questions. The author attempted to limit the resources examined to a maximum of three years old. However, on several occasions the author had to utilize resources that were 11 years old. This factor had to be kept in mind when applying it to the Rural/Metro Fire Department performance evaluation.

The next limitation was that the resources utilized for the literature review only consisted of trade journals, magazines, and newspapers. A survey of fire departments across the United States and interviews of Human Resources professionals may have provided additional current data on performance evaluations.

The last limitation was that the author found very little research information on tying merit increases to performance evaluations. Only one article addressed the issue. This makes decision making difficult due to uncollaborated data.

RESULTS

Answers to Research Questions

1. Are performance evaluations necessary?

Research indicated that while most supervisors and most employees disliked the performance review, that the evaluation can be a very valuable tool in managing a fire department or business. The performance review provides an opportunity for communication between the employer and the employee. This communication can be to make known expectations, set goals, and improve performance.

Probably the most important reason to have a performance evaluation is to document employee performance. There have been many cases brought to suit for wrongful termination. Accurate performance evaluations can help protect an employer from liability.

2. Are there common problems that are associated with administering an evaluation system?

Research showed that there are many common problems to evaluation systems. These problems arise primarily from poorly trained supervisors. It is apparent that most supervisors do not like, and even

avoid having to conduct performance evaluations. In addition, few supervisors actually receive training on how to appraise human performance, or how to prepare for and conduct an evaluation session.

Some of the common errors that supervisors make when preparing and conducting an evaluation session is the leniency error, the halo effect, and the proximity error. The leniency error occurs because a supervisor doesn't like conflict, or doesn't want to spend the time to justify a bad rating. The halo effect occurs when the supervisor has a general perception of the employee. This general perception affects the ratings given by the supervisor. The rating is then either greater or lesser than the actual performance. The last common error is the proximity error. This occurs when an item is close to other items on the evaluation form. Due to the item proximity, the supervisor rating is influenced.

The second major area that has common problems is the evaluation tool itself. All of the research shows that performance evaluations should be based upon objective observable behavior. If an evaluation has subjective items, they must be justified with specific observations of behavior to explain the opinion.

3. What are the desirable characteristics of an employee performance evaluation?

There are many desirable characteristics of an employee performance evaluation. In traditional methods, evaluations need to be objective versus subjective. By being objective, it limits any biases of the supervisor toward the employee. The ratings should be behaviorally anchored to ensure objectivity. It is important not to have too many ratings available for the supervisor. It is generally recommended to limit ratings between 4 and 7. Another important aspect is allowing the employee to complete a review of him or herself, and be allowed to communicate during the review session.

Non-traditional methods, such as the 360° review, use multiple sources of input into the employee evaluation. So in other words, the employee being evaluated may receive input from subordinates, peers, his/her supervisor, as well as customers or members of other departments. This type of review has received many praises from supervisors as well as employees.

Other non-traditional methods have allowed the employee to evaluate him or herself. The supervisor uses a review session to ask questions, give additional feedback, and make adjustments to the evaluation tool. This works on the assumption that the supervisor gives constant feedback to the employee throughout the year in order to avoid any surprises at evaluation time.

4. Should merit pay be tied to performance evaluations?

The research indicated that merit increases should not be done at the same time as the performance evaluation. If a department has a tight budget, it is difficult to award money until all evaluations have been collected and an analysis done on how much money is available for a particular rating.

DISCUSSION

Employee evaluations have been an important tool for managing employee performance for decades. When properly used, performance evaluations can be an excellent tool to communicate, motivate and reward the employee. Improperly used, the performance evaluation can demotivate, and worsen employee performance. Unfortunately, research indicates that the most evaluations in the United States are done poorly (Stafford, 1997). Most of the blame seems to fall on the supervisor due to a lack of training and experience. Other problems have been identified about the evaluation tool itself. During the authors' visit to the National Fire Academy, June 1998, he had many unstructured discussions with other

fire chiefs from across the country. From these discussions the author got the impression that there was a general dissatisfaction with their performance evaluation systems.

However, it is important to understand that the business world is constantly addressing this issue and striving for improvement. The author had previously examined 360° reviews, but was not aware of the new trend to allow the employee to complete their own performance evaluation with a subsequent meeting with the supervisor for review. I believe that by identifying weaknesses in the system, that our department can improve the process.

Through evaluating the research, it is evident that our supervisor training on performance evaluations needs to be enhanced. Fortunately, there may be some in-house expertise that could develop a curriculum for teaching supervisors how to do performance evaluations. The course curriculum would need to contain subjects such as legal implications, objectivity, communication, writing skills, performance expectations, and how to use the existing forms. Nevertheless, due to the advancements in the business world, it will be important for the future fire leaders to continually examine and update performance evaluations on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. Supervisor training needs to be enhanced. A course needs to be developed to train supervisors on how to communicate regularly through out the year with employees, how to track performance progress, and how to prepare and conduct the performance review. In addition the curriculum could teach other importance aspects such as the legal implications, objectivity, communication, writing skills, performance expectations, and how to use the existing forms. Having

supervisors properly trained to enhance their evaluation skills and abilities will promote consistency, and accuracy of future evaluations.

Recommendation 2. The Rural/Metro Fire Department Annual Achievement Evaluation form needs to be revised. The evaluation contains several categories that are objective and easily rated by supervisor observation. However, there are some categories that are subjective, and difficult to evaluate with objective behavior observations. A group of people to include supervisors and employees should take all of the considerations and characteristics of an effective system, and make revisions to the existing tool.

Recommendation 3. Tying merit increases to performance evaluations needs to be further studied. From experience, the employee is more concerned during the review with the merit increase versus the evaluation of performance. Research indicated that merit increases should not be done at the same time as the performance review. At Rural/Metro, our merit pool has been 4% for the past several years. This means that the range for increases is approximately 0% to 7%. Managers are charged with making sure that their payroll budget does not increase by more than 4% total from merit increases. This makes managing very difficult when increases are spread over an entire year. Alternative systems should be explored and benefits evaluated.

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Table 1

Performance Category	Objective	Subjective
Professional Skills		X
Analytical Reasoning		X
Internal Marketing		X
Customer Service	X	X
Attendance	X	
Appearance	X	X
Interpersonal Skills	X	X
Creativity/Innovation		X
Participation	X	
Planning/Organizing	X	X
Delegation		X
Leadership		X
Physical Agility	X	
S.O.P. Compliance	X	
Community Action Plans	X	X
Station Duties, Apparatus, and Station Projects	X	X
Scene Performance		X
Monthly Drill Attendance	X	
Training Hours	X	

Notes:

Supervisory training in performance evaluations: minimal

Periodic review of performance evaluation: many years

Some ratings indicate both objective and subjective. These are categories in which observable behaviors may justify an opinion of a subjective category.

Table 2

Characteristic	R/M Evaluation
Evaluations done annually (Weddington & Weinberg, 1997)	Yes
Evaluations done more frequently for probationary or employees with performance problems (Weddington & Weinberg, 1997)	No
Keeping 'Performance Flashes' in employees file (Ridgeway, 1987)	Yes
Evaluation based upon objective-job-related factors (Weddington & Weinberg, 1997)	No – Table 1
System utilizing Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (Maiorca, 1997)	Yes
Job Responsibilities weighted (Hulme, 1998)	No
Rating scale between five and seven delineation's (Ridgeway, 1987)	Yes
Combination word and numerical scale (Ridgeway, 1987)	Yes
Opportunity for employees to discuss ratings (Ridgeway, 1987)	Yes
Employee conducting self evaluation (Ridgeway, 1987)	Yes
Required explanations for rating greater and less than satisfactory (Ridgeway, 1987)	Yes

APPENDIX A

**RURAL/METRO CORPORATION
PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
PIMA COUNTY**

Date:

Name:

Title:

Department:

Date of Hire:

Merit Date:

PERFORMANCE RATING CRITERIA**(5) Distinguishable:**

All position requirements were exceeded. Planned objectives were achieved above the established standards and accomplishments were made in unexpected areas as well. Assistance was provided to others whenever possible and results obtained exceeded those expected.

(4) Commendable:

Results generally exceeded expectations. Obstacles to the achievement of objectives were overcome. Good working relationships with subordinates, peers and/or superiors were developed or enhanced.

(3) Competent:

All position responsibilities were met and planned objectives were accomplished within the established standards. Any minor areas where performance should have been better were counterbalanced by accomplishments such that the overall job met expectations. There were no critical areas where accomplishments were less than planned.

(2) Provisional:

Performance in one or more areas does not meet expectations. Not all planned objectives were accomplished within the established standards and some position responsibilities were not completely met. Development activities will be implemented to ensure that performance improves to a "competent" level within ninety (90) days.

(1) Unsatisfactory:

Does not meet position accountabilities. Performance is clearly below the expected level.

PERFORMANCE RATING

I. JOB PERFORMANCE

A. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS:

5. Continually projects positive professional attitude and strives to improve performance. Projects to other facilities/agencies a sincere willingness to exceed standards and take initiative in order to provide the optimum in professional performance.

4. Has established good working relationships with other agencies/customers and projects a positive company image through personal professionalism.

3. Actions portray professionalism when interfacing with other agencies, professionals and colleagues. Knowledge of how to accomplish tasks smoothly and efficiently within the organizational environment.

2. Has documented instances of unprofessional actions that were detrimental to our customer relations.

1. Repeated unprofessional actions that caused dissention among co-workers and/or negatively impacts relations with facilities and customers.

Goal: *The ability to relate and interact well with other agencies, professionals and colleagues.*

Comments:

B. ANALYTICAL REASONING:

5. Routinely receives comments or commendations regarding handling of situations/customers. Peers seek out this individual and consider her/him a problem solver or answer source.

4. Assesses situations well. Reviews options and obtains the most beneficial outcomes. Rarely encounters obstacles that he/she is unable to solve. Anticipates changes and can accommodate without faltering.

3. Makes good decisions based on evaluation of situations.

2. Often encounters situations that he/she is unable to resolve or evaluate effectively. Needs frequent guidance in handling of day to day encounters/issues.

1. History of poor decision making. Has had repeated counseling for ineffective decisions due to poor evaluation of situations.

Goal: *Sound judgement and problem solving ability in relation to job duties.*

Comments:

C. INTERNAL MARKETING

- 5. Exhibits continual growth and understanding of internal operation and politics. Rationally and articulately presents ideas and concerns and involves others in activities toward the betterment of R/M. Always able to look at the "big picture" when communicating. Supports and promotes company philosophy.*
- 4. Actively works to affect positive changes within the Company through presentation of ideas. Looks at the "big picture" when communicating. Works well within the system to accomplish tasks. Supports Rural/Metro policies and philosophy.*
- 3. Interacts rationally when presenting ideas and concerns. Is normally able to see the "big picture" when communicating with others. Able to explain R/M philosophy.*
- 2. Frequently presents ideas/comments opposing R/M philosophy. Causes dissention within the organization when presenting ideas or concerns; does not work well within the system. Usually unable to see the "big picture" when communicating.*
- 1. Always presents ideas and concerns in a negative manner. Unable to look at the "big picture" when communicating. Does not work well within the system nor support company policies and philosophies.*

Goal: *Ability to positively effect change and support of the R/M philosophy.*

Comments:

D. CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 5. Employee exemplifies our values of providing premier service to customers. Care and respect for every individual is apparent in all encounters.*
- 4. Maintains positive interactions with customers. Understands the importance of customer service and strives to provide quality customer service.*
- 3. Demonstrates sincere and conscientious efforts to satisfy the needs of both internal and external customers.*
- 2. Isolated complaints or negative feedback (substantiated) from internal or external customers.*
- 1. Multiple documented complaints or negative feedback (substantiated) from internal or external customers.*

Goal: *Professional, positive, customer oriented service.*

Comments:

II. PERSONAL PERFORMANCE

A. ATTENDANCE:

- 5. Always arrives to work early. Adheres to shift change policy (if applicable). Understands privilege of sick time and exhibits no abuse of this benefit.*
- 4. Frequently arrives to work early. Adheres to policy of shift change (if applicable).*
- 3. Arrives to work on time. No incidents of abuse of sick time or tardiness.*
- 2. Attendance incidents have affected the employee's performance and the department's ability to operate.*
- 1. Documented pattern of attendance problems has negatively impacted the employee's performance and the department's operation.*

Goal: *To minimize absence from work which may adversely affect peers and the ability to effectively operate.*

Comments:

B. APPEARANCE:

- 5. Sets standards for professional appearance. Obviously takes pride in appearance and presents themselves professionally in front of peers and customers. Positively influences others by promoting professional appearance.*
- 4. Exceeds established uniform/attire policy standards on a consistent basis.*
- 3. Maintains uniform/attire policy standards.*
- 2. Requires occasional reminders about substandard appearance. Has to be reminded of proper attire.*
- 1. Does not meet established uniform/attire policy standards. Documented instances of unprofessional appearance.*

Goal: *Maintenance of a professional appearance and presentation.*

Comments:

C. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

5. *Presents innovative ideas and concepts and relates them well to peers to affect positive changes. Able to bring people together to become involved in teamwork and common benefit.*
4. *Reacts in a positive manner and is actively involved in working with others toward a common benefit.*
3. *Relates and interacts with others in a positive manner that results in cooperation, teamwork and common benefit.*
2. *Relates well to peers but occasionally uses influence negatively causing difficulty in attaining goals for common benefit.*
1. *Exhibits inability to work with others in reaching common goals. Lack of involvement in team effort has a negative impact on the company.*

Goal: *Relating and interacting with others in a positive manner that results in cooperation and teamwork.*

Comments:

D. CREATIVITY/INNOVATION:

5. *Actualizes ideas through implementation of special programs or training of others. Continually strives to improve our company with innovative ideas that improve the quality of service or reduce unnecessary costs.*
4. *Creative. Presents ideas to supervisor for implementation that would improve quality of service or reduce unnecessary costs.*
3. *Participates in the implementation of new ideas/methods for the betterment of the operation or company.*
2. *Does not generate new ideas and concepts. Resistant to changes when they are introduced.*
1. *Does not support change. May actively work against new ideas and concepts.*

Goal: *Participation in seeking solutions for enhancement of the Corporation and its services.*

Comments:

E. PARTICIPATION:

5. *Active involvement in two or more committees/projects, attends and participates in all company meetings. Is cognizant of the importance of social awareness and actively participates in the community.*
4. *Active involvement in one or more committee(s)/project(s), attends and participates in majority of company meetings. Participates in community activities.*
3. *Attends mandatory meetings and also participates in other company and departmental meetings.*
2. *Attends only mandatory meetings.*
1. *Poor attendance at mandatory meetings. Does not attend most company meetings.*

Goal: *Active participation in committees/projects and meetings toward the betterment of the Company. Community involvement for the benefit of the community, the individual and the Company.*

Comments:

III. ORGANIZATIONAL/SUPERVISORY ABILITIES**A. PLANNING/ORGANIZING: (If applicable)**

5. *Exceeds deadlines. Consistently up to date on all projects. Excellent prioritization skills. Demonstrates the ability to see the "big picture" when planning. Supervisor is continually updated on employee's status on projects. Shares information/feedback with peers and employees.*
4. *Consistently completes projects on time. Prioritizes well. Able to visualize situations from most viewpoints when planning. Shares knowledge when important to the operation.*
3. *Projects usually completed by deadline. Effectively coordinates the activities and resources involved in assignments. Shares knowledge when requested.*
2. *Needs occasional reminders to complete projects. Loses sense of priority.*
1. *Consistently fails to complete projects or assignments.*

Goal: *The ability to conceptualize necessary plans of action and efficiently coordinate their implementation.*

Comments:

B. DELEGATION: (If applicable)

5. Delegates frequently with appropriate direction, support and follow-up. Gives recognition to personnel for tasks completed.

4. Delegates appropriately with direction, support and follow-up.

3. Delegates fairly and appropriately. Any confusion with delegated tasks are clarified with minimal loss of project momentum.

2. Seldom delegates. When delegation is employed, direction is not clear and employee is unclear as to what is expected. Further clarification is usually required.

1. Does not delegate.

Goal: The ability to allocate work equitably in order to maximize the efficiency of the team.

Comments:

C. LEADERSHIP

5. People want to work with this individual and demonstrate strong loyalty. Initiates opportunities to communicate and explain management's perspective in a positive manner. Positive attitudes are evident at all levels. Open to other's opinions and suggestions. Consistently demonstrates the ability to positively influence the work force using attributes such as motivation, coaching, decision making, planning and evaluation. Serves as a positive role model.

4. Demonstrates the ability to positively influence the work force using such attributes as motivation, coaching, decision making, planning and evaluating. Inspires trust and loyalty. This individual's team is well motivated (If applicable) Management perspective communicated in a positive, informative manner.

3. Able to influence the activities of others in a desirable direction, often by setting an example and establishing credibility. Management actions/information explained to peers and employees.

2. Occasionally influences the work force in a positive direction. Lack of team effort and motivation is evident. Creates or furthers dissention by lack of support or communication.

1. Influences the work force in a negative direction and exhibits no team effort. Lack of communications on all levels.

Goal: The ability to influence the activities of others in a desired direction.

Comments:

Additional comments for organizational/supervisory section:

IV. Area specific Performance:

FIRE SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1.	PHYSICAL AGILITY SCORE	TIME	
5.	< 2:30 Minutes		
4.	2:30 -- 2:59		<u>THIS ITEM IS NO LONGER RATED</u>
3.	3:00 -- 3:59		
2.	4:00 -- 4:45		
1.	> 4:45		

GOAL: To maintain peak physical conditioning essential to performance of fireground tasks.

2. S.O.P. COMPLIANCE
 5. Completes all SOP's within allotted time.
 4. Completes 10 SOP's within allotted time.
 3. Completes 8 SOP's within allotted time.
 2. Completes 6 SOP's within allotted time.
 1. Completes < 6 SOP's within allotted time.

GOAL: To train effectively with hands-on techniques, providing effective and consistent fireground performance.

COMMENTS:

3. COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS

5. Active within the community, member of public board or committee, presents positive image and outlook on necessary political events. Develops ideas for community involvement and motivates others to actively participate in C.A.P.
4. Develops and implements local action plans within the community to create goodwill and augment customer service.
3. Participates in local community projects as assigned, maintains professional attitude.
2. Is inconsistent with follow-through on assigned community service projects, resists personal involvement.
1. Refuses to be involved in community service projects, and/or is vocal in not supporting same.

GOAL: To be involved in the community and to positively influence direction and change for those who reside here.

COMMENTS:

4. STATION DUTIES, APPARATUS, AND STATION PROJECTS

5. Exceeds standards in maintaining stations, trucks, and assigned projects. Is continually striving to improve working conditions for self and peers; seeks additional responsibilities.
4. Active in maintaining station appearance and condition, apparatus cleanliness and state-of-readiness; and maintains all assigned projects in an up-to-date manner.
3. Station appearance meets standards, trucks washed, assignments generally completed. physical training requirements met, training hours sufficient.
2. Occasional problems found with station condition or cleanliness, truck appearance and/or serviceability not to standard, station logs and assigned projects late and/or incomplete.
1. Has complaints filed or reported regarding station condition, truck acceptability at shift change, and paperwork not completed. Failure to maintain assigned projects, poor work attitude.

GOAL: Development of professional work ethic essential to productivity, image and reliability.

COMMENTS:

5. SCENE PERFORMANCE

5. Skill level well above that expected for person of similar tenure, exemplifies service, professionalism and responsiveness to customers above and beyond that which is required in the field. Has one or more inter-departmental commendations, personal letters from customers on file. Direct supervisory observation documenting professionalism and patient management exceeding standards
4. Interdepartmental commendation, personal customer letters on file. Employee demonstrates professionalism with respect to ability, skill, and patient care. Reflects desire to improve, shown by meeting C.E. credits, involvement in ACLS or Red Cross training courses, or specialized training in fire suppression or other area of fire skill - one or more supervisor attaboys in file.
3. Knowledge and skill level meet requirements, field performance within acceptable parameters, no complaints from peers or customers.

2. Needs improvement with EMS or fire ground skills, patient care is less than adequate, occasionally exhibits poor professional image.
1. Serious diversion from acceptable performance levels on the scene with poor judgement and poor skills utilized. May have complaints on file regarding unacceptable practices or service rendered.

GOAL: Sound judgement with respect to skill level, patient care and concern in the field arena.

COMMENTS:

6. MONTHLY DRILL ATTENDANCE

5. No unexcused drills, performs at distinguished levels on physical training and test score averages. Teaches a minimum of 2 classes annually at drill. Shows positive leadership skills and assists others in improving proficiency.
4. No unexcused drills, performs at distinguished level in physical training or test score averages. Teaches a minimum of 1 class annually at drill. Positive role model, influential with peers.
3. Not more than 1 drill not made up. Test scores and physical training meet minimum requirements. Competent in required performance criteria.
2. Not more than 2 missed drills. Test scores below average. Physical training needs improvement. Attitude toward training and monthly drills needs improvement.
1. Greater than two missed drills. Test scores indicate serious lack of performance Physical training non-existent or seriously below expectations. Extremely poor attitude and effort applied toward meeting established requirements.

GOAL: To assure strong knowledge foundation upon which skills can be focused and strengthened.

COMMENTS:

7. TRAINING HOURS

5. Fire: >30 Hours per month
4. Fire: <30 Hours per month
3. Fire: <25 Hours per month
2. Fire: <20 Hours per month
1. Fire: <20 Hours per month

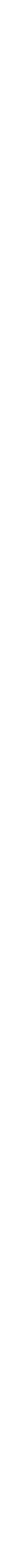
GOAL: To assure strong knowledge foundation upon which skills can be focused and strengthened. Meet minimum national requirement.

Development Activities
Employee: _____

Development activities for ratings 2 or below: ***E/S*** ***Timeline***

**PERSONAL ACTION PLAN
EMPLOYEE:**

(This action plan is based on the employee's evaluation and their self evaluation.)



Goals/Projects:

Short Term:

Long Term:

Action Plan:

Training: (Current position)

1. **Technical:**

2. **Personal/Professional development:**

Training: (Career Development)

1. **Technical:**

2. **Personal/Professional development:**